

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 IO-13 OMB-01 TRSE-00 SSM-03 ACDA-07 /081 W
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R 010848Z AUG 77

FM AMEMBASSY AMMAN
TO /SECSTATE WASHDC 2610
INFO USDEL ALEXANDRIA
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 AMMAN 4336

ALEXANDRIA FOR SECRETARY'S PARTY

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, JO

SUBJECT: THE BADRAN GOVERNMENT AFTER ONE YEAR: A CARETAKER REGIME

1. SUMMARY: FOLLOWING IS SUMMARY OF
AIRGRAM ANALYZING PERFORMANCE OF JORDANIAN PRIME
MINISTER BADRAN'S GOVERNMENT ONE YEAR AFTER HIS
APPOINTMENT. IT IS BEING SENT BY CABLE AS USEFUL
BACKGROUND FOR SECRETARY'S VISIT TO JORDAN.
ALTHOUGH CONSIDERED BY JORDANIANS MORE HONEST AND
PROTECTIVE OF EAST BANK (VS. PALESTINIAN) INTERESTS
THAN HIS PREDECESSOR, BADRAN, STUDY CONCLUDES,
HAS BEEN INEFFECTIVE IN DEALING WITH DOMESTIC
PROBLEMS JORDAN CONFRONTS AND WHICH IT WAS ASSUMED
HE HAD BEEN CALLED TO OFFICE TO DEAL WITH. IT IS NOW
WIDELY BELIEVED THAT HIS IS A CARETAKER GOVERNMENT WHILE
KING HUSSEIN AWAITS A PROPITIOUS MOMENT TO REPLACE HIM.
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LIKELY CANDIDATES ARE HIS PREDECESSOR, ZAYD RIFAI;
COURT CHIEF ABDUL HAMID SHARAF; OR MINISTER OF
EDUCATION ABD-AL SALAM AL-MAJALI. RESUMED PEACE NEGOTIATIONS
MAY ALSO ADD TO REASONS REQUIRING REPLACEMENT FOR BADRAN.
KING AND JORDANIANS ARE TRADITIONALLY WARY, PARTICULARLY IN
ABSENCE OF FUNCTIONING PARLIAMENTARY INSTITUTIONS, OF UNDERTAKING
IMPORTANT FOREIGN POLICY NEGOTIATIONS WITHOUT HAVING MAJOR

GOVERNMENTAL (AS OPPOSED TO PALACE) FIGURES INVOLVED. UNDER SUCH CIRCUMSTANCES AS ACTIVE PROSPECTS OF SERIOUS MIDEAST NEGOTIATIONS, KING MIGHT BE LED TO APPOINT FOREIGN POLICY EXPERTS SUCH AS RIFAI OR SHARAF AS PRIME MINISTER. HOWEVER, KING IS UNPREDICTABLE IN HIS APPOINTMENTS AND ABOVE SCENARIO IS BY NO MEANS INEVITABLE. END SUMMARY.

2. ON JULY 14, 1976, RELATIVELY UNKNOWN MUDAR BADRAN FORMED HIS FIRST CABINET, REPLACING ZAYD RIFAI AS PRIME MINISTER. DOUR, PAROCHIAL AND COLORLESS, BADRAN PROVIDED STRONG CONTRAST WITH FLAMBOYANT ZAYD RIFAI, WHO AS CONFIDANTE OF KING HUSSEIN AND PROMINENT FIGURE ON ARAB INTERNATIONAL SCENE, HAD BEEN A MAJOR FORCE IN JORDANIAN GOVERNMENT FOR OVER THREE YEARS. IT WAS ASSUMED THAT APPOINTMENT OF BADRAN REPRESENTED A "RETURN TO BASICS" BY THE GOVERNMENT: A DESIRE TO DEVOTE MORE ATTENTION TO THE MYRIAD DOMESTIC PROBLEMS (INFLATION, POOR PUBLIC SERVICES, WATER AND FOOD SHORTAGES) FROM WHICH HARRIED MIDDLE AND LOWER CLASSES SUFFERED. APPOINTMENT WAS ALSO SEEN AS ASSERTION OF MILD EAST BANK NATIONALISM, AS WELL AS REPUDIATION OF SEVERAL OF RIFAI'S

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 AMMAN 4336

ALEXANDRIA FOR SECRETARY'S PARTY

PERSONAL FOREIGN AFFAIRS INITIATIVES (SYRIAN-JORDANIAN RAPPROCHEMENT, MORE ATTENTION TO WEST BANK MATTERS, AND FLIRTATION WITH A SOVIET AIR DEFENSE SYSTEM FOR JORDAN).

3. BADRAN, OBSCURE FIGURE WHO HAD RISEN THROUGH MILITARY, INTELLIGENCE, AND CIVIL SERVICE RANKS, MOVED QUICKLY TO ESTABLISH HIS IMAGE AS A MR. FIX-IT. HE REVERSED ONE OF RIFAI'S LAST OFFICIAL ACTS BY HOLDING MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS. HE REVIVED PRACTICE OF HOLDING CABINET MEETINGS AND OPEN FORUM SESSIONS IN CITIES OUTSIDE AMMAN. HE CALLED ON CITIZENS TO EXPOSE OFFICIAL CORRUPTION. HE TOOK PERSONAL INTEREST IN IMPROVING WATER SHORTAGES AND REMOVING CONGESTION IN AQABA PORT. YET THESE INITIATIVES GRADUALLY REVEALED THEMSELVES AS FINGER-IN-DIKE, AD-HOC MEASURES LACKING PLANNING OR EFFECTIVE
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FOLLOW-UP, AND BADRAN'S GOVERNMENT SOON RETREATED INTO A SHELL OF GENTLEMANLY IGNORANCE OF PRESSING ISSUES. HIS PUBLIC RELATIONS INITIATIVES SLOWED AS THE NON-IMPLEMENTATION OF ANNOUNCED PROGRAMS BECAME A STANDING JOKE AROUND AMMAN. EVEN BADRAN'S CLOSE RELATIONSHIP WITH CROWN PRINCE HASSAN SOURED AS LATTER MORE AND MORE CAME TO DOMINATE BADRAN. HIS EGREGIOUS GAFFE IN THE \$140 MILLION SAUDI AIR DEFENSE PAYMENT AND HIS HESITANT HANDLING OF RELATIONS WITH SYRIA HAVE TOTALLY UNDERCUT HIS EFFECTIVENESS WITH JORDAN'S TWO MOST IMPORTANT ARAB NEIGHBORS.

4. DRIFT WAS EQUALLY EVIDENT IN LESS VISIBLE BUT MORE IMPORTANT AREAS OF BUDGET MANAGEMENT AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT. BADRAN, WHO HAS NO ECONOMIC TRAINING, CONTINUED TO PAY LIP-SERVICE TO GOALS OF REDUCING CHRONIC BUDGET DEFICIT AND INCREASING THE ABILITY OF JORDAN'S ECONOMY TO GENERATE REVENUE--BUT NO MOVEMENT WAS EVIDENT TOWARD DEVELOPMENT OF COHERENT POLICY IN THIS AREA, AS 1977 BUDGET DEFICIT OF SOME \$100 MILLION ILLUSTRATES. AND IN SPITE OF THIS DEFICIT, HIS GOVERNMENT RECENTLY ANNOUNCED POLITICALLY ATTRACTIVE EXPANSIONARY BUDGET FOR COMING YEAR. THE VAUNTED FIVE-YEAR PLAN REMAINS HEAVILY A "PAPER" OPERATION, WITH MUCH INVESTMENT GOING INTO SUCH UNPRODUCTIVE AREAS AS REAL ESTATE AND HOME CONSTRUCTION. BADRAN, WHO AS PRIME MINISTER IS NOMINAL FOREIGN MINISTER, HAS WISELY

LEFT CONDUCT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS TO KING HUSSEIN
AND COURT CHIEF ABDUL HAMID SHARAF.

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5. AFTER ONE YEAR AND TWO CABINETS, DOMESTIC GRUMBLING IS STILL LOUD, WHILE DRIFT AND INDECISION CHARACTERIZE GOVERNMENT'S CONDUCT OF AFFAIRS. TALK IS STILL CIRCULATING THAT, FOLLOWING HIS AUGUST 11 SILVER JUBILEE, KING INTENDS TO REPLACE BADRAN WITH ZAYD RIFAI, 'ABDUL HAMID SHARAF, OR MINEDUCATION ABD AS-SALAM AL-MAJALI AS LEADING CONTENDERS--ALL PERSONS WITH EVIDENT LEADERSHIP QUALITIES. SUCH A MOVE WOULD BE POPULAR AMONG JORDAN'S BUSINESS AND ECONOMIC LEADERS. BADRAN, HOWEVER, STILL COMMANDS CONSIDERABLE PASSIVE SYMPATHY AMONG JORDAN'S UNDERPRIVILEGED MAJORITY (BECAUSE OF HIS REPUTATION AS BEING "CLEAN"). HIS REPLACEMENT BY RIFAI OR SHARAF MIGHT THEREFORE BE REGARDED AS RETURN TO PALACE "CRONEYISM," WITH A CONSEQUENT DETERIORATION OF KING'S STANDING AMONG THE BODY POLITIC. IN LONG-RUN TERMS, KING WOULD BE BETTER OFF TO ACCEPT THIS TEMPORARY SETBACK IN POPULAR OPINION IF THE ALTERNATIVE IS TO PERMIT FURTHER DRIFT BY BADRAN'S DO-LITTLE GOVERNMENT. ALSO, IF SERIOUS MIDEAST NEGOTIATIONS RESUME, IT MIGHT BE NECESSARY TO REPLACE BADRAN (WHO IS ALSO FOREIGN MINISTER) WITH A PRIME MINISTER WITH FOREIGN POLICY EXPERTISE. PICKERING

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Message Attributes

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